

April 30, 2003
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT URGES COMMUNITY GROUPS TO INVITE A JUDGE TO SPEAK

As communities throughout Illinois and the nation commemorate Law Day Thursday, May 1, the Illinois Supreme Court is reminding community groups and service organizations that their members can learn more about the justice system by inviting a judge to speak.

The Illinois Supreme Court, in cooperation with the Illinois Judges Association, established the Illinois Judicial Speakers Bureau as an outreach program to increase awareness of the judicial system and its role in the community.

To date, about 135 judges from around the state have offered to volunteer their time as speakers. They are available to address various community groups and speak on virtually any topic related to the administration of justice; but they can't give legal advice.

"I am committed to educating citizens about our judiciary and its role in your community. The Speakers Bureau is a wonderful resource to help educate citizens about the critical roles played by judges and the court in everyday life," Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Mary Ann G. McMorrow said.

"We look forward to being invited to speak before their group," said Circuit Court Judge Ann B. Jorgensen, president of the Illinois Judges Association. "There are a variety of topics judges can talk about. We think it's important that people meet their judges, learn how the judges serve the community and how the legal and justice system works."

To request a speaker, or for more information about the Judicial Speakers Bureau, contact Dawn M. Frison, assistant to the press secretary for the Illinois Supreme Court at (312) 793-0870; or e-mail to dfrison@court.state.il.us. The Speakers Bureau will also fulfill requests for the "Judges in the Classroom" program designed by the Illinois Judges Association to provide students with the opportunity to hear firsthand from a judge how the judicial system works.